

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
SHEILA KUEHL

December 11, 2018

Supporting the Violence Against Women Act

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed into law in 1994, with bipartisan support, to improve the nation’s response to violence against women and to create services that are responsive to the identified needs of survivors. VAWA has been both effective and efficient by successfully reducing the prevalence of domestic violence and by saving over \$14 billion in averted social costs.

Initially passed to improve the criminal justice response to domestic violence and increase the availability of services to victims of domestic violence crimes, VAWA has since been expanded to provide funding for services to unserved and underserved victims and survivors including victims of sexual assault, dating violence and stalking, undocumented survivors, communities of color, LGBTQ survivors and tribal and Native communities.

VAWA has been renewed, with bipartisan support, in 2000, 2005 and 2013. As of 2014, the Office of Violence Against Women awarded over \$6 billion in grants and cooperative agreements to address domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual

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assault, stalking and teen dating violence. Reauthorization of VAWA was extended in the continuing resolution adopted by Congress last month, and is set to expire in December 2018.

VAWA is a critical piece of legislation and is the foundation upon which our systems to address domestic violence and interpersonal violence are built. VAWA has expanded the availability of funding to support a coordinated community response to domestic violence/interpersonal violence and has worked to expand and deepen our understanding of the needs of our communities and how we can best address them. By focusing on these issues through a national lens, VAWA ensures a comprehensive national program to apply evidenced-based solutions and support to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Absent this support, we risk an increase in domestic and interpersonal violence, erosion of critical support systems including shelter and legal services and the creation of additional barriers to safety and health for those whose challenges arise not from their own conduct but from the violent acts of third parties. Absent VAWA support, our capability to move forward and provide services will be limited and necessarily focused on using limited County resources to fill the gaps.

The impact of domestic and interpersonal violence is felt throughout the County and is reflected by the large numbers of those seeking or needing services. Within Los Angeles and throughout the Country, domestic violence is a significant cause of homelessness. According to the LAHSA 2018 Homeless County, over 3000 adults are homeless because they are actively fleeing domestic/intimate partner violence. That number includes 10% of homeless families and 14% of the adult female homeless population. When the inquiry is expanded to include homeless persons who have

experienced domestic violence, those numbers increase to 48% of the adult female homeless population and 31% of homeless families. Similarly, domestic violence accounts for a large amount of law enforcement resources. Law enforcement agencies throughout the County field close to 50,000 calls for service in domestic violence cases each year.

Numerous County departments provide services and support for victims and survivors of domestic and interpersonal violence and their children including the Departments of Public Health, Public Social Services, Health Services, Children and Family Services, Mental Health, and Probation, as well as County Counsel and District Attorney. Accordingly, the impact of loss of funding will be acutely felt throughout the County should VAWA fail to be extended.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a five-signature letter to the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation expressing the County's commitment to and ensuring continued and expanded funding for the Violence Against Women Act and its support for H.R. 6545, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018; and
2. Oppose any proposed cuts to Violence Against Women Act funding in the future.

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